

information requested in the pamphlet, *Applying for a Federal Job*, and adheres to the requirements specified in the vacancy announcement.

(10) Can an agency design its own form and seek OMB approval for its use?

Yes. OMB will continue to consider requests for agency-specific forms for unique jobs with highly specialized requirements or special forms needed for a computer-assisted application system. However, the necessity for these requests should be reduced with the blanket approval for the use of resumes only for automated application processing.

(11) Can a Federal agency require its own employees to file for vacancies using a particular form?

Yes, but only when recruiting from its own employees. For example, an agency may require a particular form, such as the *Optional Application for Federal Employment*, for internal merit promotion actions. OMB approval is required for any specific form that seeks job-related information from non-agency employees. Non-agency employees include former employees with reinstatement eligibility, transfer eligibles from other agencies, and nonstatus applicants. For this purpose an agency is an "executive agency" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, for example, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Navy, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

(12) How may agencies handle incomplete applications, i.e., applications that do not contain all the information requested in the vacancy announcement?

Each agency should establish policy on how to handle incomplete applications. Agencies may:

- Not consider incomplete applications;
- Ask applicants for the missing information; or
- Rate incomplete applications as submitted.

All applicants for a particular vacancy must be treated the same way. Agency vacancy announcements should state the policy on incomplete applications.

(13) Should applicants continue to submit proof of 5 or 10 point veterans' preference or proof of Agency/ Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program eligibility with their applications?

Yes. Applicants should be advised, when allowed by the application method, to submit proof with their applications if they are claiming 5 or 10 point veteran's preference or eligibility for priority consideration under the Agency or Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program. When the

application method, such as an email transmission of resumes, does not support the attachment of special forms or documents to the application, applicants should be advised of how and by when they should submit their claim, i.e., mail and/or fax, postmarked by, etc.

(14) Why do many automated application processing systems require that the application format be limited to the resume?

Many automated application processing systems rely on optical character recognition for translating data on a printed document into a computer file that can be searched for data elements, such as name and address; skills; work experience; and education. In order to reliably capture the data from the document it must be clear and easy to read. Since hand written documents and information typed into confined boxes on forms are often difficult to read, the optical character recognition systems cannot reliably capture data presented in this manner.

Other automated systems rely on the electronic movement of application information from one automated system to another. Specifically formatted application forms may not be able to be properly translated from a sending automated system to a receiving system. The generic text contained in the resume can be converted to a format that is universally acceptable from one automated system to another.

(15) How will agencies certify that the information contained in applications is correct and that applicants meet suitability requirements for Federal employment?

Agencies will continue to determine suitability and obtain certification of application information from the *Declaration for Federal Employment* (OF 306). Agencies should continue to obtain the *Declaration for Federal Employment* before individuals are appointed. Agencies should not routinely ask applicants to submit the *Declaration* along with their resumes or applications. A major reason for creating the *Declaration* was to separate qualifications information from suitability information so that agencies could better protect the privacy of individuals by restricting access to more sensitive background data. Given the privacy concerns and the intent to reduce the burden on applicants, OPM continues to strongly encourage agencies to require the *Declaration* only from job finalists except where to do so would have a significantly adverse impact on the hiring process.

(16) May agencies permit the use of official time and Government resources

to develop and submit electronic applications for job vacancies?

Agencies may establish their own policy on the use of official time and resources for the preparation and submission of electronic applications for job vacancies. The guiding principle in determining whether or not Federal employees should be allowed to use Government time and resources in pursuit of alternative employment is whether such use is in the best interest of the agency and, therefore, the Federal Government.

(17) How is resume data collected on the USAJOBS resume builder secured?

The resume data collected on the USAJOBS resume builder falls under the Privacy Act. A Privacy Act notice is available on the system to users. OPM uses secure transactions to encrypt resume data when it is moved to and from the USAJOBS web site to create and edit resumes. Resume access on the USAJOBS web site is secured by password, name and Social Security Number. Job seekers uncomfortable with submitting resumes over the Internet continue to have the option to submit resumes using traditional application methods selected by agencies such as hand-delivery, mail or fax.

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RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

Sunshine Act Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Railroad Retirement Board will hold a meeting on November 18, 1998, 9:00 a.m., at the Board's meeting room on the 8th floor of its headquarters building, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60611. The agenda for this meeting follows:

(1) Request for Reconsideration of Blanket Deputation for Office of Inspector General Special Agents.

(2) Year 2000 Issues.

The entire meeting will be open to the public. The person to contact for more information is Beatrice Ezerski, Secretary to the board, Phone No. 312-751-4920.

Dated: November 26, 1998.

Beatrice Ezerski,

Secretary to the Board.

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